

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

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TO : FE - Mr. Walter S. Robertson

DATE: April 13, 1955

FROM : C - Walter P. McConaughy

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

SUBJECT: Morale on Taiwan

176B

REVIEWED BY: *[Signature]* DATE: *4/19/55*

TAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

ADVISORY DATE: *4/19/55*

REASON(S):

AUTH: *[Signature]*

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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RELEASE DENIED

Embassy Taipei confidentially surveyed 301 Americans in Taipei on Morale, particularly with reference to possible loss of Quemoy and Matsu. Despatch No. 470, of March 30 (attached) gives the results of that survey.

The survey tends to support the conclusion that the loss of Quemoy and Matsu, while harmful to morale, would not so seriously damage morale on Taiwan as to justify making it the major factor in the United States calculations.

The importance of Quemoy and Matsu to the people on Taiwan is related to their character as a symbol of hope for an early military return to the mainland, rather than to the security of Taiwan itself, which is of paramount concern to most of the population. It was generally conceded that to the Taiwanese, who constitute 7/9ths of the population, return to the mainland is not an important consideration. Even among mainlanders there is a sufficiently widespread appreciation of the "reality"---that return to the mainland depends on international developments largely beyond control of Free China---and a sufficient degree of adjustment to life on Taiwan to make the loss of these symbols of less than crucial importance.

Despite some differences, the preponderance of opinion seemed to be that a loss of the islands as the result of a military defeat in which the United States was not directly involved would hurt morale less than an evacuation of the Tachen type. However, one of those commenting pointed out that if a Tachen-style evacuation were carried out, the loss of the islands could be blamed on American policy, thereby mitigating the effects of the loss on Nationalist military prestige. However, the islands were lost, it is felt there would be some deterioration in American-Chinese working relations.

As to steps which might be taken to minimize the fall in morale from the loss of the islands, Taipei suggests on the basis of its survey that first of all, the Taiwan public should not be given an exaggerated idea of the relationship of the islands to the defense of Taiwan. A show of

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FECA: DL Osborn: aft!

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- 2 -

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American sea and air power, increments in American military strength (notably the Air Force), and an increase in military and economic assistance would also help counteract the decline in morale.

FECA:DL:Osborn:apt

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